

Serial No.: 10/632,263
Art Unit: 3732

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A dental instrument comprising:

a generally cylindrical handle having a threaded opening for receiving a tool tip connector, a first metal tool tip having a threaded portion on one end, and an elastomeric cover having an outer surface,

said handle being connected to said first metal tool tip by said tool tip connector, wherein said connector includes an a threaded opening on a first end for receiving said threaded portion of said tool tip and a threaded portion on an opposing second end for engaging said threaded opening of said handle to fasten said connector to said handle,

said nonmetal elastomeric cover being supported by said handle,

said elastomeric cover having a central region, and a first and a second enlarged end region on opposite sides of said central region and integrally connected to said central region,

said central region having a central wall, said central wall having a smallest outer diameter at point of least wall thickness,

said first and said second enlarged end region each having having a largest outer diameter at a greatest wall thickness at a thickest point on said outer surface of said cover,

each said greatest wall thickness being at least 30 percent greater than said least wall thickness.

Claim 2. (Original) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein at least one of said greatest wall thickness is at least 40 percent greater than said least wall thickness, and said cover has a length

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with a midpoint and two end points, said least wall thickness is within 20 percent of said cover length from said midpoint of said cover length, and each said greatest wall thickness is within 20 percent of said cover length from each said end point of said cover length.

Claim 3. (Original) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein at least one of said greatest wall thickness is at least 50 percent greater than said least wall thickness, and said cover outer surface is generally smooth and substantially continuously curved with intermittent protrusions.

Claim 4. (Original) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein at least one of said greatest wall thickness is at least 70 percent greater than said least wall thickness, and said cover has a length with a midpoint and two end points, said least wall thickness is within 10 percent of said cover length from said midpoint of said cover length, and each said greatest wall thickness is within 10 percent of said cover length from each said end point of said cover length.

Claim 5. (Original) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein at least one of said greatest wall thickness is at least 100 percent greater than said least wall thickness.

Claim 6. (Original) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein said dental instrument further comprises a second tip.

Claim 7. (Currently amended) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein said ~~nonmetal~~ elastomeric cover has an outer surface having a plurality of raised portions.

Claim 8. (Currently amended) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein said ~~nonmetal~~ elastomeric cover comprises silicone polymer.

Claim 9. (Canceled)

Claim 10. (Currently amended) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein said ~~nonmetal~~ elastomeric cover is adhered by an adhesive to said handle.

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Claim 11. (Currently amended) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein said nonmetal elastomeric cover comprises elastomeric material having a shore hardness of less than 60.

Claim 12. (Currently amended) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein said nonmetal elastomeric cover comprises elastomeric material having a plurality of colors.

Claim 13. (Previously presented) The dental instrument of claim 12 wherein said plurality of colors form generally parallel streaks.

Claim 14. (Original) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein said central region has a cover outer surface and at least of portion of said central region outer surface is generally shaped like the central portion of one of the elongated sides of an ellipse when the central region is viewed in longitudinal cross-section.

Claim 15. (Original) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein said handle is effectively and substantially cylindrical.

Claim 16. (Original) The dental instrument of claim 1 wherein said central region length has a length of not more than 98 percent of the length of the cover.

Claim 17. (Canceled)

Claim 18. (Canceled)

Claim 19. (Currently amended) A dental instrument comprising:

a generally cylindrical metal handle having a first threaded opening on a first end for receiving a first tool tip connector and a second threaded opening on an opposing second end for receiving a second tool tip connector, a first tool tip having a threaded portion on one end and a second tool tip having a threaded portion on one end, and a cover comprising elastomeric material,

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said handle being connected to said first tool tip by said first connector, wherein said connector includes an a threaded opening on a first end for receiving said threaded portion of said first tool tip and a threaded portion on an opposing second end for engaging said first threaded opening of said handle to fasten said connector to said handle,

said handle being connected to said second tool tip by said second connector, wherein said connector includes an a threaded opening on a first end for receiving said threaded portion of second tool tip and a threaded portion on an opposing second end for engaging said second threaded opening of said handle to fasten said connector to said handle,

said elastomeric cover being supported by said handle,

said cover having a central region, and a first and a second enlarged end region on opposite sides of said central region and integrally connected to said central region,

said central region having a central wall, said central wall having a smallest outer diameter at point of least wall thickness,

said first and said second enlarged end region each having an end wall, each said end wall having a largest outer diameter at a point of greatest wall thickness,

each said greatest wall thickness being at least 30 percent greater than said least wall thickness.

Claim 20. (Original) The dental instrument of claim 19 wherein said cover comprises silicone polymer.

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Claim 21. (Currently amended) A dental instrument, comprising:

a nonmetal cover,

a cylindrical metal handle tube having a central channel,

a metal tie bar having a first threaded end and an opposing second threaded end, and

a first metal tool tip having a threaded opening on one end and a second metal tool tip having a threaded opening on one end,

said threaded opening of said first tool tip being connected to said first threaded end of said metal tie bar and said threaded opening of said second tool tip being connected to said second threaded end of said metal tie bar, said nonmetal cover being supported by said cylindrical metal handle tube, said metal tie bar extending through said central channel of said cylindrical metal handle tube,

said cover having a central region, and a first and a second enlarged end region on opposite sides of said central region and integrally connected to said central region,

said central region having a central wall, said central wall having a smallest outer diameter at point of least wall thickness,

said first and said second enlarged end region each having an end wall, each said end wall having a largest outer diameter at a point of greatest wall thickness,

each said greatest wall thickness being at least 30 percent greater than said least wall thickness.